

Sometimes we played in our backyard, where there was a treehouse to hide in and a garage to run around. But mostly we played on Mrs. Terhaar's lawn, where there was no place to get away, and the sidewalk, the street corner, and the driveway edged us in.

Modern English usage also demands ending punctuation. We offer this as a significant moment of choice for the writer:

Writers make choices about ending punctuation to achieve certain effects. Ending punctuation choices include the period, the exclamation point, and the question mark.

A period achieves a neutral effect; it lets the reader create meaning from the words only.

It made a difference if you were fast. [Implies: Hmm, OK, we'll learn more soon.]

It made a difference to Chris. Chris was the fastest runner, and the most beautiful too.

An exclamation point implies a sense of overt excitement.

It made a difference if you were fast! [Implies: Wowza! You know what I mean!]

It made a difference to Chris! Chris was the fastest runner, and the most beautiful too!

A question mark implies a question or wonderment, bewilderment, or anxiety.

It made a difference if you were fast? [Implies: Why? Really? How? Are you sure?]

It made a difference to Chris? Chris was the fastest runner, and the most beautiful too?

We play with our punctuation choices in the lesson and then we add our revisions to our narrative. We choose the period here, as it sustains the tone of a story that is still developing and is still cautious in its tone. Despite being seemingly mundane, periods are often the most effective punctuation choice. In this